Sonny Perdue, Governor of Georgia

Sonny Perdue was sworn in as Georgia 's 81st Governor on January 13, 2003. Before his run for Governor, Perdue proudly served his local community, as well as Middle Georgia, his state, and the nation in a variety of roles. He has been a businessman, community leader, Sunday school teacher, State Senator, Majority Leader and President Pro Tempore of the Georgia State Senate, as well as an officer in the United States Air Force.
Sonny was born on December 20, 1946, in Perry, Georgia, to a lifelong farmer, and a classroom teacher. Perdue attended Warner Robins High School and earned a doctorate in veterinary medicine in 1971 from the University of Georgia. Prior to being admitted to veterinary school, he played football at the UGA as a walk on. While still in school he volunteered to serve his country in the United States Air Force where he honed his flying skills, by earning instrument, flight instructor, and multi-engine ratings. A licensed pilot for more than thirty years, Sonny has enjoyed traveling the state in his single-engine Bellanca Super Viking.

Following his honorable discharge from the Air Force in 1974 with the rank of Captain and a brief tenure as a practicing veterinarian in Raleigh, North Carolina, Perdue returned to his native Georgia and became a successful small-business owner. He started two businesses from the ground up, concentrating in agribusiness and transportation. Today, those businesses have grown to include several locations across the Southeast.
Sonny was already a dedicated leader in his church and his community when he decided to enter public service. After serving on the Houston County Planning and Zoning Board during 1980's, Sonny caught the attention of local community leaders and was asked to run for the Georgia State Senate. He won, and spent the next 11 years representing the people of Houston, Bibb, Bleckley, and Pulaski Counties in the General Assembly.
In a time of increasing apathy toward politicians and policymakers, Sonny Perdue never forgot that his job was to serve the people, not play politics. During his tenure, Sonny's reputation as a skilled listener, patient decision-maker, and tireless worker earned him the bipartisan respect of his colleagues. As a result, he rose quickly to leadership positions. After only four years in the Senate, Perdue was selected by his peers to the office of Majority Leader. Then, in 1997, Democratic and Republican Senators elected him President Pro Tempore, another testament to his expertise as one of Georgia's most effective consensus builders.

As a state senator, he was often praised for tackling issues when no one else had the courage to do so and for his ability to grasp the nuances of complex problems. Sonny was recognized as a leading authority on numerous issues including agriculture, transportation, education, emerging technologies and economic development.
Perdue campaigned for Governor on a platform of restoring public trust in state government and empowering all Georgians by eliminating undue interference by government bureaucracies. He has dedicated his administration to attracting new

businesses and jobs to Georgia, improving the quality of programs that touch the lives of children, and fighting for a comprehensive ethics reform package.

For all of his success in business and public service, he is proudest to hold the offices of devoted husband, loving father, and proud grandfather.

Sonny is married to the former Mary Ruff of Atlanta, Georgia. The couple has four children: Leigh, a speech therapist; Lara, a software consultant in Atlanta; Jim, a minister who is currently starting a church in Forsyth County; and Dan, an undergraduate student at Kennesaw State University. They also have twin granddaughters, Mary Kate and Sunni, and one grandson, Jack. Mary and Sonny have also served as foster parents for newborns awaiting adoption.